Executive Summary and Plan Implementation

Since the mid-1980s, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) recognized that the fishing public desires an opportunity to participate in the development of management strategies for the state's fisheries resources. In 1989 the department completed a five-year management plan for Hauser Reservoir and in 1993 a similar management plan was prepared for Canyon Ferry Reservoir. Following expiration of these plans in the late 1990s, the Upper Missouri River Reservoir Fisheries Management Plan 2000-2009 was written to manage Canyon Ferry, Hauser, and Holter Reservoirs and the Missouri River from Toston to Canyon Ferry and below Hauser Dam as a system.

This fish management plan addresses the fisheries of the upper Missouri River Reservoir system including Canyon Ferry, Hauser, and Holter reservoirs, and the Missouri River from Toston to Townsend and between Hauser and Holter reservoirs (Figure 1). The plan sets management direction for a 10-year period (2010-2019) by providing specific goals and strategies for each of these waters. The plan also provides a framework for continued public involvement in monitoring and evaluating fisheries management activities.

Fish communities in these reservoirs have changed dramatically in the past 10 years (1999-2009) and existing management strategies warrant review. The establishment of a substantial walleye population in Canyon Ferry, the loss of the popular kokanee salmon fishery in Hauser Reservoir, and changes in the yellow perch fisheries in Canyon Ferry and Holter Reservoirs have significantly affected angler use of the fisheries in this reservoir system.

A variety of management tools are used in this plan to affect fish populations, including changes to fishing regulations (Table 1), habitat manipulations and fish stocking. In addition, management "triggers" (catch rates in gill nets, Table 2) have been established to maintain populations at levels appropriate for balanced predator/prey interactions and to maintain the multi-species diversity required in the plan. The plan will be allowed to function for three years before changes will be contemplated, because fish populations take time to respond to regulation changes and other management actions. However, within the first three years, if triggers are exceeded in ways that are judged to seriously threaten the ability to achieve management goals, then recommended management actions may be deferred or additional actions implemented to allow evaluation and consideration of alternative approaches in an "adaptive manner."

Management Plan Organization

This Executive Summary provides an overview of the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) process, structure of the plan, a description of the public involvement process used to develop the plan, and a summary of management goals for each body of water. Plan Implementation details the ongoing public involvement process that will be used to monitor, evaluate, and modify the plan over the 10-year period. The Management Plan Area provides a general description of the upper Missouri River reservoir system. Respective sections on individual waters provide more detailed information on history, physical and fisheries description, past/present management, and proposed management alternatives, goals, and strategies.

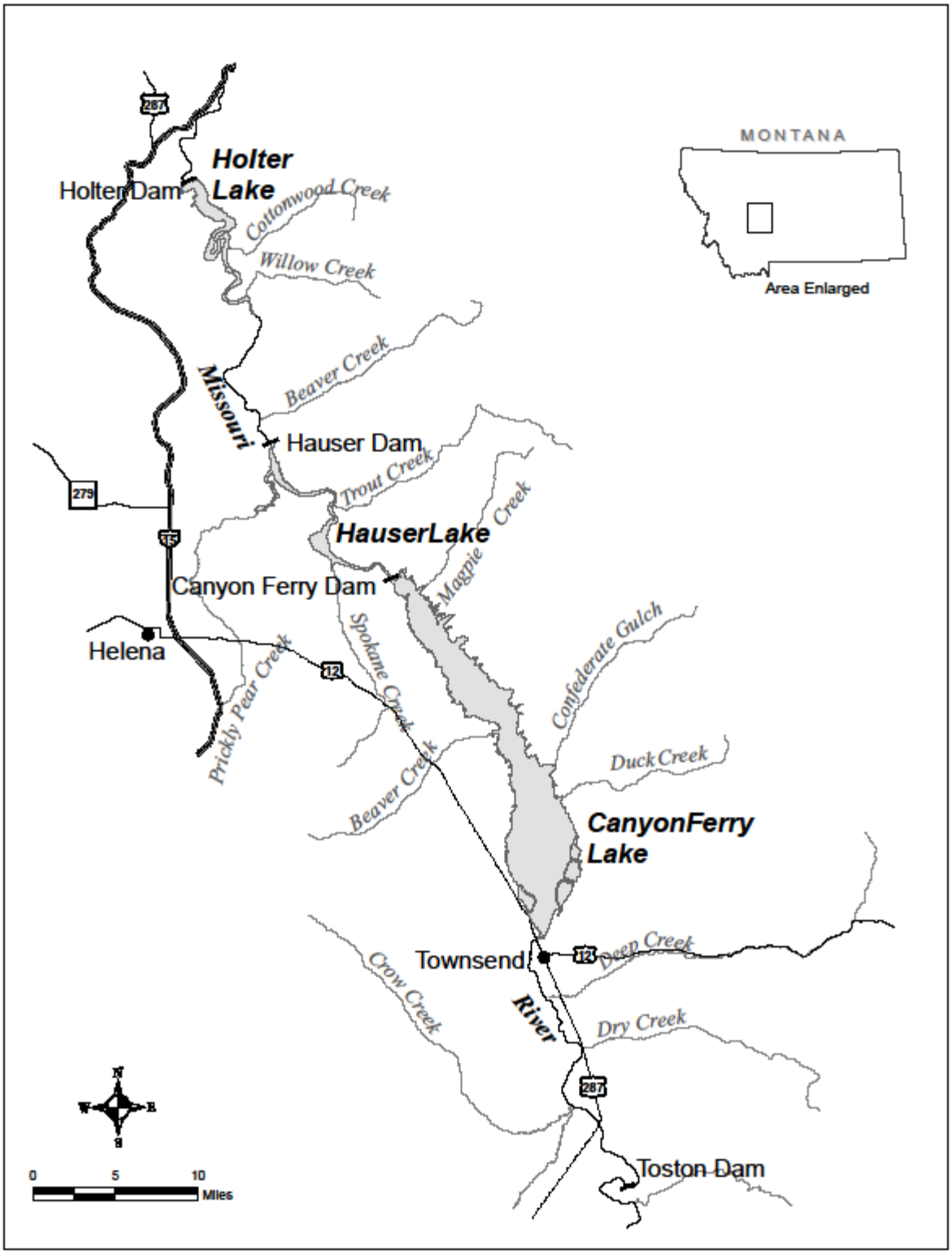

Figure 1. The upper Missouri River reservoir system.

Table 1. Fishing Regulations in Place Under the 2000-2009 Management Plan and Proposed Regulations for the 2010-2019 Management Plan

	Canyon Ferry		Hauser		Holter	
	2000-2009 Plan	**2010-2019 Plan**	**2000-2009 Plan**	**2010-2019 Plan**	**2000-2009 Plan**	**2010-2019 Plan**
Walleye	20 daily and 40 in possession, only 1 > 28”	Modified version of Alternative 2. Finalized during 2011 regulation setting process. See page 30 for criteria.	10 daily and 20 in possession, only 1 > 28”	20 daily and 40 in possession, only 1 > 28”	6 daily and 12 in possession, includes 5 fish < 20” and 1 fish > 28”	10 fish daily, with only one fish over 28”. No harvest of fish between 20 and 28”
Yellow perch	15 daily and in possession	15 daily and in possession	50 daily with no possession limit	25 daily with no possession limit	50 daily with no possession limit	25 daily with no possession limit
Rainbow trout	Combined trout 5 daily and 10 in possession	Rainbow trout 5 daily and 10 in possession	Combined trout and salmon 5 daily in any combination and 10 in possession	Combined trout and salmon 5 daily in any combination and 10 in possession	Combined trout and salmon 5 daily in any combination and 10 in possession	Combined trout and salmon 5 daily in any combination and 10 in possession
Kokanee	N/a	N/a	Combined trout and salmon 5 daily in any combination and 10 in possession	Combined trout and salmon 5 daily in any combination and 10 in possession	Combined trout and salmon 5 daily in any combination and 10 in possession	Combined trout and salmon 5 daily in any combination and 10 in possession
Brown trout	Combined trout 5 daily and 10 in possession	Catch and release only	Catch and release only	Catch and release only	Catch and release only	Catch and release only
Burbot	5 daily and in possession	5 daily and in possession	5 daily and in possession	5 daily and in possession	5 daily and in possession	5 daily and in possession
Northern pike	10 daily and in possession	No limit	10 daily and in possession	No limit	10 daily and in possession	No limit

Table 2. Management Goals and Triggers for the 2010-2019 Upper Missouri River Reservoir Fisheries Management Plan. Gillnet Trends are Based on Three-Year Running Average Catch Rates. WE = walleye, YP = yellow perch, RB = rainbow trout, SU = suckers, and LL = brown trout.

	Canyon Ferry			Hauser			Holter		
	Goal	**Upper Trigger**	**Lower Trigger**	**Goal**	**Upper Trigger**	**Lower Trigger**	**Goal**	**Upper Trigger**	**Lower Trigger**
Walleye	5 per net	> 7 per net or YP and/or RB < 3 per net	< 3 per net and YP > 10 per net and RB>5-6 per net	2-3 per net	> 6 per net or YP and/or RB < 1 per net	< 2 per net and YP and RB above goals	4 per net	> 6 per net or YP and/or RB < 2 per net	< 2 per net and YP and RB above goals
Yellow Perch	10 per net	> 15 per net recommend raising bag limit	< 3 per net	4 per net	> 7 per net recommend raising bag limit	< 1 per net	6 per net	> 10 per net recommend raising bag limit	< 2 per net
Rainbow trout	5-6 per net	None	< 5 per net evaluate stocking plan < 3 take active measures	3 per net	None	< 2 evaluate stocking plan < 1 take active measures	6 per net	None	< 4 evaluate stocking plan < 2 take active measures
Kokanee	N/a			None	None	None	None	Adjust stocking rate if LL < 100 per mile in Hauser tailrace	None
Brown trout	1 per net	> 1 consider allowing harvest	None	0.5 per net	None	None	None	None	None
Burbot	0.40 per net	None	None	0.5-1 per net	> 2 per net	< 0.5 per net evaluate reduction in harvest	0.25 per net	> 2 per net	None
Northern pike	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Forage	15 SU per net 10 YP per net 20 zoop/L	WE > 7 per net	SU < 5 per net YP < 3 per net	None	None	None	None	None	None

Montana Environmental Policy Act

The MEPA requires state government to be accountable to the people of Montana when it makes decisions that affect the human environment. MEPA provides a process to help ensure that government actions are based on informed decisions. It does this by requiring that reasonable alternatives are evaluated, the consequences of a decision are understood, and the public's concerns are known.

MEPA requires all state agencies to recognize and consider to the fullest extent possible the consequences that their actions may have on the quality of the human environment (75-1-201, Montana Code Annotated (MCA)) and directs them to:

- Utilize a systematic, interdisciplinary approach which will ensure the integrated use of the natural sciences and the environmental design arts in planning and decision making which may have an impact on the environment; and

- Develop methods and procedures which will ensure that environmental values and amenities are identified and may be given appropriate consideration in decision making along with economic and technical considerations.

MEPA requires FWP to:

- Issue a draft Management Plan;

- Encourage and accept public comments on the draft; and

- Issue a final Management Plan.

The Final Management Plan may:

- Modify alternatives, including the preferred alternative;

- Develop and evaluate alternatives not previously considered;

- Supplement, improve, or modify the analysis contained in the draft;

- Make factual corrections; and

- Explain why comments do or do not warrant further response.

The purpose of preparing a draft plan prior to decision-making is to describe the proposed action, and evaluate potential impacts, including cumulative and secondary impacts, on the physical environment. This process helps to ensure that the department's decisions are based on all available information and that the analysis is accurate. The public comment period for the draft Management Plan was September 16 thru October 23, 2009. Please see Appendix A for more information on management alternatives and public comments.

This document assisted FWP in planning and decision making by presenting an integrated and interdisciplinary analysis of administrative alternatives for management of the upper Missouri River reservoir system. This document describes the proposed action and evaluates potential consequences on the physical environment. Analyses of impacts presented in this document were based on literature

research, public comments, and interviews with FWP personnel and wildlife agency personnel in other states.

Public Involvement and Citizen Workgroup

The Upper Missouri River Reservoir System Fisheries Management Plan Citizen Workgroup was appointed in January 2009 by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) as an advisory body to help identify fisheries goals and management alternatives to be addressed in the 10-year management plan. This 18-member workgroup represented various interests with a stake in the fisheries of the reservoir system including warm and coldwater anglers, sportsman's groups, local communities, businesses, guides, kids fishing, and others. Through its Charter, the Workgroup was charged with providing management alternatives; although consensus was reached on some issues, it was not necessary for proposed alternatives to be considered by FWP. Through six meetings held throughout spring and summer of 2009, the workgroup identified the following goals/desired end results:

The Upper Missouri River Reservoir Management Plan should result in:

1. Management of all three reservoirs and connecting river sections as healthy multi-species fisheries.
2. Strategies that emphasize trout and walleye while recognizing perch as an important game and forage species.
3. Improved forage species and availability for game fish in the upper Missouri River reservoir system.
4. Realistic regulations and limits while providing a high level of angler satisfaction.
5. Social acceptance based on shared biological and social/economic interests.
6. An adaptive management plan and process to react to the changing dynamics of the system and adjust accordingly.

Fish, Wildlife & Parks endorsed and accepted these goals/end results for the 2010-2019 Fisheries Management Plan.

Please see Appendix A for more information on the Citizen Workgroup and management alternatives proposed for the draft and final Management Plan.

FWP considered alternatives proposed by the Citizen Workgroup and included many of them in the draft management plan, which was available for public comment from September 16 to October 23, 2009. During the public comment period, FWP held open houses in Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Great Falls, Townsend, and Helena. Open houses provided the opportunity for the public to view proposed fish management alternatives and provide substantive comments in writing. The draft document was also available for viewing on the FWP web site, as well as means for people to provide comment electronically. During the public comment period, 203 written public comments were received. A summary of responses to common public comments that are not directly addressed in the Management Plan can be found in Appendix B. After taking into account public comments, biological and social considerations, in some cases the alternatives adopted by FWP for the final Management Plan were not universally supported by the Workgroup or members of the public.

Role of Other Government Agencies

FWP is the lead agency for fisheries management in the upper Missouri River reservoir system. Maintaining a high quality, cost-effective, multi-species fishery with high levels of angler satisfaction is the department's overall management goal. To achieve this goal, this management plan has been prepared to direct future Department activities for the study area. Other agencies have responsibility for managing land and water important to the fishery resource.

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is responsible for regulating activities that could affect the quality of state water. A permit from DEQ is required to construct or use any outlet for discharge of wastes or wastewater into state surface water or groundwater under the Montana Water Quality Act. Nonpoint source discharges from new or increased sources are regulated by DEQ under the nondegradation policy described in Title 75, Chapter 5, Part 3, MCA.

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) is responsible for regulating state surface and groundwater rights. Owners of all supply wells within the state are required to file a notice of completion of any new well within 60 days of completion. Water supply wells must be drilled by a contractor licensed by the Board of Water Well Contractors or by a person who has obtained a permit from the board to drill a well on agricultural property for private use. Any groundwater appropriation exceeding 35 gallons per minute or 10-acre feet of water per year for beneficial use, or is located inside an established controlled groundwater area, must be permitted by DNRC prior to well construction.

Three federal agencies are involved in management of resources in the upper Missouri River reservoir management area. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) manages federal lands around Canyon Ferry Reservoir, including numerous campgrounds and boat launches, and is responsible for operating Canyon Ferry Dam. The Bureau of Land Management administers campgrounds and boat launch facilities on Hauser and Holter Reservoirs. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for permitting placement of any dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S. or wetlands under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers also provides operational oversight of Canyon Ferry Reservoir when water levels are elevated into the flood control pool.

Managing the Fisheries

The species composition of the Upper Missouri River Reservoir system is typical of large river and reservoir fisheries in the intermountain region. The sport fishery is comprised primarily of rainbow trout, walleye, yellow perch, brown trout, kokanee salmon, mountain whitefish, and burbot (ling). Combined, the upper Missouri River reservoir system accounted for nearly 8% of the fishing pressure in Montana in 2007. These reservoirs traditionally are in the top five most heavily fished waters in Montana with Canyon Ferry averaging 92,527 angler days (1989-2007), Hauser averaging 58,487angler days (1989-2007) and Holter averaging 60,657 angler days (1989-2007). This level of pressure equates to an average of 15.4 angler days per acre and 12.6 days per acre on Hauser and Holter, respectively, and 2.6 angler days per acre on Canyon Ferry. Hauser Reservoir was the most heavily fished body of water in the state in 1991, which was attributable to a booming kokanee salmon population that resulted in a record 141,000 fish harvested in 1991. Since 1999 total angler pressure in the reservoir system has declined 31.5%, with Canyon Ferry pressure declining 30.5% and Holter declining 46% between 1999 and 2007. Angler use in Hauser declined through the early 2000s; however pressure there has increased 2.5% from 1999 to 2007.

Walleye have become a significant component of the Canyon Ferry fishery after this developing population expanded to reach fishable numbers in 1998. Prior to 1996, no walleye were observed in the standard roving creel census and reports of walleye caught by anglers were uncommon. Currently walleye serve as one of the most sought after species in the reservoir, with nearly 50% of summer anglers targeting exclusively walleye in 2007.

Angling pressure on Hauser Reservoir has varied considerably and has been closely linked to the abundance of kokanee salmon. Angler use trends decreased in response to the collapse of the kokanee fishery in the late 1990s. All efforts to revive the Hauser kokanee fishery following record high water flows in 1997 have failed. Currently, Hauser contains record high abundance of walleye due mostly to flushing of juvenile walleye from Canyon Ferry Reservoir upstream.

Holter Reservoir traditionally provided one of the most diverse and productive multi-species fisheries in the state. Historically, Holter provided good to excellent fishing for rainbow trout, kokanee salmon, walleye, and yellow perch simultaneously. Like in Hauser, flushing of walleye from Canyon Ferry Dam has heavily influenced the Holter fishery. Yellow perch harvest and abundance has fallen sharply since development of the Canyon Ferry walleye fishery in the late 1990s. Walleye abundance is at or near record high levels, with small fish dominating angler catch and population surveys. Modifications to the Holter rainbow trout stocking scheme has maintained a quality trout fishery. High angler catch rates for large rainbows are common, especially in the spring.

The presence of walleye at the head of the most heavily fished reservoir complex in Montana creates a challenge in maintaining these historically popular fishery resources. Walleye have tremendous reproductive potential in Canyon Ferry, in contrast to Hauser and Holter reservoirs, and will thrive there as long as there is an adequate forage fish supply. To sustain a multi-species fishery composed of trout, perch, walleye, native species, and other forage species will require active management of walleye to reduce predation on yellow perch, rainbow trout, and kokanee salmon. Failure to adequately manage walleye numbers will result in diminished perch and trout fisheries, which would be inconsistent with the six goals developed by the Citizen Workgroup. As documented in other western reservoir systems, poor walleye management may ultimately result in populations of stunted walleye as the prey base is depleted.

Missouri River (Toston Dam to Canyon Ferry Reservoir) Management Goals

The goal for managing the Missouri River between Toston Dam and Canyon Ferry Reservoir is to provide naturally reproducing brown and rainbow trout populations for recreational fishing opportunities in the Missouri River and associated tributaries and to provide important spawning and rearing conditions for the Missouri River/Canyon Ferry system. Management goals and strategies include:

- Rely on rainbow trout to provide both a resident fishery throughout the year and a migratory fishery linked to Canyon Ferry that enters the river during the fall and spring.

- Rely on brown trout to provide a resident fishery throughout the year and a migratory population of large fish that enter the river during the fall.

- Monitor and manage the northern pike population in the river and reservoir to minimize impacts to the existing trout and forage species. Expansion of a predator such as northern pike could have negative effects to the existing fish community in the Missouri River.

- Manage the walleye population to minimize impacts on existing trout and forage species and provide a low-level sport fishery.

Canyon Ferry Reservoir Management Goals

Walleye abundance in Canyon Ferry Reservoir has remained relatively steady over the past ten years. Following rapid population expansion in the late 1990s, walleye numbers peaked at 10.4 per net in 1998 and have since fluctuated between 2.0 to 7.4 per net. The current walleye population is composed of a large number of smaller-sized fish. Yellow perch abundance has increased slightly in recent years, following record low abundance in 2004 and 2005. Declines in perch abundance are largely attributable to increased predation by walleye. Canyon Ferry continues to maintain a quality rainbow trout fishery following changes to stocking strategies to reduce predation by walleye on rainbow trout plants.

Management of walleye in Canyon Ferry Reservoir in the previous ten years focused on high levels of angler harvest to manage walleye population growth to maintain a multi-species fishery. Although management alternatives for walleye in this new plan provide some strategies to improve size structure of the Canyon Ferry walleye population, active walleye management through high bag limits is still necessary to maintain the multi-species fishery by maintaining walleye population levels appropriate for available forage.

The primary goal for managing the Canyon Ferry-Missouri River fishery is to maintain a cost-effective multi-species fishery that maintains high levels of angler use during both the open water and ice fishing seasons. Management of the multi-species fishery will attempt to maintain desirable sport species (rainbow trout, walleye, yellow perch, brown trout, and burbot) as well as maintain populations of non-game species (e.g., suckers, dace, sculpins). To achieve this goal for the system, management strategies must be developed to enhance reproduction and survival of all potential species that will be influenced by predation. Management goals and strategies include:

- Continue to recognize the importance of yellow perch and apply management strategies to improve the current population to enhance the sport fishery and identify importance as a forage species. Yellow perch are the preferred prey of walleye and provide a significant component to the winter ice fishery. In order to preserve spawning sized perch, continuing conservative harvest regulations already in effect is recommended.

- Rely on hatchery rainbow trout to continue providing angling opportunity at approximately the current level of angler catch. Changes to the numbers and size of rainbows stocked in response to walleye population growth have so far maintained the quality of the rainbow fishery.

- Rely on walleye to maintain a self-sustaining sport fishery to enhance the summer fishery and provide an additional component to the winter fishery. Active walleye management will be necessary to maintain population levels consistent with availability of forage. Strategies for maintaining walleye abundance at levels appropriate for available forage are based on population “triggers” to adjust management actions as walleye populations fluctuate.

- Increase the number of brown trout residing in the reservoir as an additional component to the sport fishery. Maintain restrictive regulations in the reservoir as well as the Missouri River from Toston to Canyon Ferry.

- Rely on burbot (ling) to compliment the winter sport fishery by maintaining the current level of burbot in the reservoir. Burbot is the most popular native sport fish in Canyon Ferry Reservoir. Little is known about the population dynamics and limiting factors that regulate the burbot population.

- Manage and enhance the forage base to support a productive multi-species fishery that includes walleye, trout, and yellow perch. Continue yellow perch habitat enhancement project (i.e., Christmas tree structures) and identify other potential habitat enhancement projects for existing forage species. Introduction of new forage species is not proposed in this Management Plan.

- Monitor and manage the northern pike population in the river and reservoir, and evaluate impacts to other species. An already limited forage base in Canyon Ferry may be unable to support a voracious predator such as northern pike. The Plan proposes strategies to suppress additional population expansion.

- Manage fishing contests at Canyon Ferry Reservoir to balance general angling public concerns with competitive tournaments on a species-specific basis, and ensure that tournaments are consistent with species management objectives. Regulation of fishing tournaments on Canyon Ferry will reflect management strategies for individual fish species. Authorize up to three walleye tournaments in a calendar year but no more than one tournament per month to provide a balance with existing users of the lake that are not interested in competitive fishing events and who would be impacted by tournament activities. Applications for fishing tournaments will be accepted per FWP policy and considered on a first come, first served basis until all available slots are filled.

- Prevent introduction of new fish species into the upper Missouri River reservoir system by continued prohibition of the use of live fish as bait. An inadvertent introduction could significantly impact the existing fish communities in Canyon Ferry Reservoir as well as upstream and downstream waters.

- Prevent new diseases and exotic aquatic plant and wildlife species from entering the Canyon Ferry/Missouri River system and limit the expansion of current disease agents.

- Work with FWP's Wildlife Bureau and other government agencies to determine the impacts of pelicans and cormorants to Canyon Ferry fish populations. Consider bird population management measures only if impacts to sport fish populations are documented and deemed significant.

Hauser Reservoir Management Goals

The goal for managing the Hauser Reservoir fishery is to provide a cost-effective, balanced multi-species fishery with the opportunity to catch rainbow trout, walleye and yellow perch with kokanee, brown trout, and other species occasionally contributing to the sport fishery. Until factors limiting fisheries production in Hauser Reservoir are addressed, the fishery will not reach it's full potential. Management goals and strategies include:

- Rely primarily on stocked rainbow trout to provide the principal fishery and provide most fishing opportunity. Continue current stocking regime and adjust as angler use and population abundance change.

- Recognize kokanee salmon as a limited supplemental species to rainbow trout with poor opportunity as a viable sport species in Hauser Reservoir. Current kokanee abundance is too low to set or maintain a realistic management goal.

- Rely on walleye to provide a balanced, cost-effective fishing opportunity in Hauser. Utilize angler harvest as a tool to counteract the effects of walleye flushing from Canyon Ferry Dam. Rely on population "triggers" to adjust walleye management strategies as needed.

- Rely on brown trout to provide a limited trophy-fishing experience that is reliant entirely on natural reproduction.

- Rely on yellow perch to provide a self-sustaining fishery that is based entirely on natural reproduction. Maintain conservative angler harvest limits on yellow perch.

- Rely on burbot to provide a low-level, self-sustaining fishery that is supported entirely by wild reproduction.

- Continue work with the Bureau of Reclamation to improve seasonal water quality of water running into Hauser Reservoir from Canyon Ferry Dam.

- Evaluate annual and seasonal flushing rates of fish out of Hauser Reservoir. Determine feasibility of screening Hauser dam to reduce flushing losses.

- Determine walleye flushing rates from Canyon Ferry and evaluate measures to reduce or eliminate walleye flushing from Canyon Ferry Dam. Increased walleye densities in Hauser affect the balance of the multi-species fishery with increased predation on trout and perch.

- Enhance wild fish spawning opportunities in Hauser Reservoir and in tributary streams to Hauser Reservoir.

- Continue to monitor Hauser Reservoir and associated tributaries for whirling disease. Prevent introduction of exotic plant and wildlife species from entering the reservoir system.

- Manage fishing derbies/tournaments on Hauser Reservoir to minimize conflict with the general angling public and to ensure consistency with fishery management goals and objectives. Authorize up to three tournaments per year.

Missouri River - Hauser Tailwater (Hauser Dam to Holter Reservoir) Management Goals

The management goal for the Missouri River below Hauser Dam is to provide a multi-species fishery focused on wild rainbow trout and brown trout, with walleye and kokanee providing a low-level component to the fishery. Management of this water is greatly affected by the management direction of Canyon Ferry, Hauser, and Holter reservoirs. Management goals and strategies include:

- Rely on rainbow trout (particularly wild rainbow trout) to provide a cost-effective, sustainable fishery. Encourage the development of wild rainbow trout spawning and recruitment from the Hauser tailrace and Beaver Creek.

- Rely on brown trout to provide a self-sustaining trophy component to the Hauser tailwater fishery. Maintain the catch and release fishing regulation that was implemented in 1992 for this reach of the Missouri River and Holter Reservoir.

- Rely on remaining kokanee salmon flushed from Hauser Reservoir and any natural reproduction and supplemental stocking that may occur in Holter Reservoir to contribute in a limited way to the multi-species fishery.

- Rely on walleye flushed from Hauser Reservoir, resident walleye, and migratory adults from Holter to contribute to a multi-species fishery. Adjust walleye bag limits to maintain consistency with walleye management strategies in the reservoirs. Determine walleye flushing rates from Canyon Ferry Reservoir and downstream survival of flushed walleye if research funds become available.

- Enhance wild fish spawning opportunities in Holter Reservoir tributary streams.

- Monitor the Missouri River and principal tributaries for whirling disease. Prevent introduction of exotic plant and wildlife species from entering the reservoir system.

Holter Reservoir Management Goals

The management goal for Holter Reservoir is to provide a cost-effective, balanced multi-species fishery with the opportunity to catch rainbow trout, walleye, yellow perch and kokanee salmon. Management goals and strategies include:

- Rely on rainbow trout to provide one of the principal sportfish species in Holter Reservoir with continued emphasis on maximizing the contribution of wild to stocked rainbow trout in the fish community. To minimize flushing losses, stocking of fish will occur after high water.

- Rely on kokanee salmon flushed from Hauser Reservoir, stocking of surplus hatchery fish, and any natural reproduction that may occur in Holter Reservoir to provide limited kokanee harvest. Recognize kokanee as a supplemental fish to the sport fishery in Holter Lake.

- Rely on walleye to provide a cost-effective fishery that allows a moderate level of harvest while providing the opportunity to catch a trophy fish. This fishery will be reliant entirely on wild reproduction or flushing from upstream dams for recruitment. Adjust harvest regulations to maintain walleye densities appropriate for forage abundance. Determine walleye flushing rates and survival from Canyon Ferry Reservoir and impacts on Holter Reservoir.

- Rely on yellow perch to provide a cost-effective, self-sustaining fishery that is maintained entirely by wild reproduction. Preserve conservative perch limits on Holter Reservoir to prevent over harvest and provide forage for walleye.

- Rely on burbot to provide a self-sustaining fishery that is supported entirely by wild reproduction. Increase data collection efforts to learn more about the Holter burbot population.

- Determine annual and seasonal flushing rates of fish out of Holter Reservoir and the feasibility of screening Holter Dam to reduce flushing losses if funds become available.

- Enhance wild fish spawning opportunities in Holter Reservoir tributary streams. Identify and complete enhancement projects that will benefit spawning and recruitment of wild fish in Holter Reservoir.

- Monitor Holter Reservoir and principal tributaries for whirling disease. Prevent new diseases and exotic plant and wildlife species from entering Holter Reservoir and limit the expansion of current disease agents.

- Manage derbies/tournaments for consistency with fisheries management goals and objectives for Holter Reservoir and to minimize conflicts with the general angling public. Authorize up to two tournaments per year.

Plan Implementation and Public Involvement

This plan will be used to direct fisheries resource management activities for the next 10 years (2010-2019) on Canyon Ferry Reservoir, Hauser Reservoir, Holter Reservoir, and associated sections of the Missouri River. Fish population monitoring will be conducted annually to verify the effectiveness of management decisions. Data will be summarized and presented to interested citizens at annual public meetings (Table 3).

Table 3. Upper Missouri River Reservoir Management Plan Implementation Process

Schedule	
Action	**Dates**
Draft Management Plan Public Comment	September 16 through October 23, 2009
Final Management Plan (FWP Commission tentative and final approval)	Spring 2010
Adopt new fishing regulations	October 2010
Monitor Fisheries	On-going, annually
Prepare Annual Report	Fall, annually
Public Meetings	Late winter or early spring, annually
Review/Revise Management Plan	As needed
Propose Changes to Fishing Regulations	Regulation review cycle, or as needed